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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

MEMORIAL

OF

CAPT. DALLAS, OF THE 12TH U. S. INFANTRY,

ADDRESSED TO THE

Senate Military Committee,

WITH ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS.

1861.

MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable Committee upon Military Affairs of the United States Senate:

Senators,—During the last session of Congress, my name was presented to the United States Senate by President Lincoln, for their concurrence in my appointment as a Captain in the Twelfth Regiment of Infantry. As I am informed, my character and military antecedents were submitted for examination to your Honorable Committee, who, on an exparte statement of some person unknown to me, decided to report to the Senate, as their recommendation, that it was inexpedient that the appointment should be confirmed. Accordingly, on or about the 8th day of August my nomination was rejected, and I ceased any longer to hold the rank of Captain in the U. S. Army.

On receiving information to that effect, I deemed it my duty to proceed to Washington, and investigate the causes producing my rejection. I arrived there on the 10th day of August, and immediately prepared a letter (Exhibit No. 1) to Brigadier General Wm. B. Franklin, the Colonel of the Twelfth Infantry. This letter I submitted to Prof. A. D. Bache, Superintendent U. S. Coast Survey, who was cognizant of the facts therein stated. Mr. Bache endorsed my letter, as given in Exhibit No. 2.

These letters I delivered in person to General Franklin, at his Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia; General Franklin im-

mediately wrote the letter addressed to the President, herewith appended, and marked Exhibit No. 3. Adjutant-General Thomas also endorsed my papers with the remarks contained in Exhibit No. 4.

Senator Milton S. Latham, of your Honorable Committee, after examining my statement and accompanying letters, went with me to the President's house, and introduced me to Mr. Lincoln. Senator Latham was so much convinced of the great wrong that had been done me, that he did not hesitate to urge upon the President, in the strongest terms, my reinstatement to my former position. His Excellency, the President, impressed with the arguments used by the honorable Senator, gave the order contained in Exhibit No. 5.

My next step was to seek the Secretary of War, Hon. Simon Cameron. The arduous duties of his very responsible position prevented him from according me a personal interview, and I was informed through the Adjutant-General and Senator Latham, that he would have to decline reappointing me, on the ground that the decision of the honorable Senate, during their recess, was to him a finality.

The same evening, Senator Latham, in order to make my documentary evidence as complete as possible, at my request, endorsed upon my papers the substance of his remarks to his Excellency, the President. They will be found in Exhibit No. 6, herewith appended, together with the concurrence of Senator Henry Wilson, Chairman of your honorable Committee which was subsequently added.

His Excellency, Mr. Lincoln, according me a ready interview, with that benevolence of character for which he is so distinguished, took my papers for personal examination, and on Saturday, August 17, reaffirmed his contingent order for my reinstatement. Exhibit No. 7.

On Monday, August 19, 1861, introduced to the presence of

Mr. Cameron by your honorable Chairman, my reinstatement was directed by the honorable Secretary of War, in the order appended, and marked Exhibit No. 8.

According to the statement of Senator Latham, I was accused of having been dismissed from the Navy and Marine Corps. This, if true, would have amply justified your honorable Committee in your recommendation to the Senate, but the facts, as shown in the appendix, prove conclusively—

First.—That my failure to pass my examination at the Naval Academy, was solely caused by temporary incapacity to acquire the study of mathematics from physical weakness. That this weakness was the result of continued exposure for four years in the active service of the Government, in the line of my duties. On the Mexican coast, during the war, prostrated by yellow fever. In the East Indies, in a proverbially sickly and dangerous climate, prostrated by dysentery; this clinging to me in a chronic form, and preventing necessary mental application. That neither *legally* nor *technically* could this *failure* be termed a *dismissal.*

Secondly.—That my mental capacity was unimpaired from the fact, that shortly after my examination, I was employed successfully by the United States Coast Survey, both acting in command on board ship, and as an assistant in more scientific duties, requiring a good knowledge of mathematics.

Thirdly.—That my confirmation by the Senate in 1854, for the position of Second Lieutenant in the U. S. Marine Corps, was an evidence that, (at a time when, as remarked by Prof. Bache in his appended letter, "the circumstances of my being dropped were comparatively recent,") I was then considered a capable and trustworthy officer.

Fourthly.—That I *was not dismissed* from the Marine Corps, a purely military organization, and a corps of the same army in which I now hold a position, but *resigned* for personal reasons, with the expressed regret of my superior officers, and with an excellent military and social reputation.

Though feeling, that with the evidence adduced personally to two members of your honorable Committee, I am secure in your favorable recommendation to the Senate for my confirmation, in this my second nomination by President Lincoln, yet I have thought it but right to thus put upon record the facts connected with my rejection and reinstatement, as not only due to my own personal respect, but as also due to the high character that my family has ever borne in the councils as well as battles of my country.

I desire to state that I am not a citizen of the District of Columbia. I am and have been for years a citizen of the State of New York.

All of which is most respectfully submitted, by

Your most obedient servant,

ALEXANDER J. DALLAS,

Captain 12th U. S. Infantry.

APPENDIX.

Exhibit No. 1.

Letter from Capt. Dallas to Brig. Gen'l. Wm. B. Franklin, U. S. Army.

WASHINGTON, Aug. 10, 1861.

General,—

* * * * * * *

In the spring of 1846, I was appointed a midshipman in the Navy of the United States, and ordered to report for examination at the Academy, in October. This examination, I passed creditably.*

In the early part of 1847, I was ordered to the coast of Mexico, at first under command of Commander D. G. Farragut; then, Lieut. Com'd'g Thomas Turner; afterwards acting as Aid to Commodore M. C. Perry, leaving the station, at the close of the war, in the sloop "John Adams," Commander S. B. Wilson. From nearly all these gentlemen, I received commendatory letters.†

My next cruise was in the same waters, mostly attached to the schr. "Flirt," Lt. Comd'g. E. Farrand. My last cruise was in the East Indies, sloop "Marion," Commander Glendy. In this cruise was laid the foundation of that illness which undoubtedly caused my failure to pass the examination which resulted in my dismissal. In the Straits of Sunda, I was attacked, after a severe day's work, with *dysentery*. I was totally unable to leave my cot until the ship arrived in China, and so completely unfitted for duty, that I was sent home in the sloop "Plymouth," Commander Gedney.

On the passage I did very little duty, and on arriving at Norfolk, Virginia, was sent to the Naval Hospital, under charge of Dr. Barrabino, with

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* Number four of a class of about thirty.

† With Capt. Farragut, after six months' service, I performed Lieutenant's duties.

my disease fast assuming a chronic form. This was in the latter part of January, 1851, after a nearly continuous sea service of four years. Here I remained, weakened mentally and physically, and thoroughly unfitted for systematic study, until the latter part of March, when knowing that many of my classmates were at the Academy, and anxious to avail myself of the opportunity of study, I repaired thither. Though never formally upon the sick-list, owing to my desire not to miss drills and recitations, I was nevertheless a constant sufferer and visitor at the Dispensary.

On the first of June of the same year, there occurred the semi-annual examination upon such studies as had been pursued during the past term. They consisted, as far as my recollection serves, of INFANTRY TACTICS, French, Spanish, and *Mathematics.* There were no doubt others which have escaped me.* I passed in all branches, except *Mathematics.* My conduct-roll was excellent; of these facts the Navy Department has probably a record.

The case, then, stands simply thus, so far as relates to this dismissal. *After a continuous sea service of nearly four years, part of the time in active duty as aid during a war, twice prostrated by disease, yellow fever and dysentery, the latter clinging to me in a chronic form, I was allowed but* ABOUT FIFTY DAYS TO ACQUIRE HABITS OF STUDY, LONG LOST BY THE VARIOUS VICISSITUDES OF AN ACTIVE SEA LIFE, *and prepare myself for an examination, which was to be considered final, if I failed in any single branch, though the question of* SEAMANSHIP *was not to be propounded in any form.*† Without, therefore, examining me on that point, they pronounced me not qualified for the Navy, and sent me forth into the world to do the best I might, weakened by disease, contracted in my country's service, and stamped at the threshhold of my career in life as an incompetent man. This was cruel. It was more, it was unjustifiable, for at least, if you require anything of your servant, you should give him the *means* of performing his duty.

Every effort was made by myself, and such officers as Commodores Morris, Jos. Smith, and Rousseau, and others, who acknowledged the injustice that was done me, to have me granted another trial, but without success.

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* Since the above was written, I have examined the records of the Department, and find that my memory has served me accurately, with the addition of Drawing. Other branches not examined upon were Fencing, Artillery Practice, and exercise with ship's guns.

† The laws regulating the period of probation as midshipman, at the time of my entrance into the service, were such that my *final* examination under them would have not taken place for a year from this time.

I now found employment on the United States Coast Survey, and performed at various times the duties of a LIEUTENANT IN THE NAVY—an ample refutation of the charge of unfitness for the service. *I was for some time in command of various vessels* belonging to the Coast Survey, *and was only deprived of this employment, when a proper economy induced the use of an* OFFICER OF THE NAVY *for this purpose.*

Having been offered a commission in the U. S. Marine Corps, I accepted the same, and served for one year in barracks, and in charge on ship-board, with the commendation of my superiors. The late Brig. Gen'l. Henderson, did me the honor to say of me, "that I was one of the best drilled officers that had ever left his Headquarters." And in reference to my career in the Marine Corps, Major Russell, now in the city, can also testify. I gave up my position in the Corps, Sept. 24, 1855, for the reason that having inherited some property, I desired to enjoy more completely the comforts of home with my family, in some civil occupation.

I had no intention of again entering military life, nor should I have done so, but for the present unhappy condition of our country, when fired with that military ambition, which has never been extinguished in my breast, I again offered my services to my country. Not satisfied with the empty offer, I gave up my position in New York under the Central Park Commission, and coming to Washington, enlisted as a private in Captain Smead's National Rifles. I confidently refer to Captain Smead's letter to the Adjutant General, recommending me for promotion. I was finally detailed from my Company for special duty in the Adjutant General's Office, where I remained until appointed a Captain in your regiment.

On the 8th ult. the Senate rejected my nomination.

If, General, I felt that I was wanting in ability for this position, *you* will give me credit when I assert, I would never have sought it; and the grief and mortification I must necessarily feel at this rejection by the Honorable Senate has been tempered also by the warm sympathy I have received from my new associates in arms, as well as those to whom I am known by the evidence of a life of thirty-one years.

As the Colonel of my late regiment, as a gentleman in whose estimation I would stand well, I have written this letter to you, and I respectfully beg that you will use it in any way that may best conduce to my restoration to the army, and thus give me an opportunity to vindicate the loyalty and patriotism of a family name which has ever stood prominently and well with the country.

I am, General,

With much respect,

A. J. DALLAS,

Late Captain 12th U. S. Infantry.

Exhibit No. 2.

Letter from Prof. A. D. Bache, Supt. U. S. Coast Survey, to Brig. Gen. Wm. B. Franklin, U. S. Army.

To Brig. Gen. Wm. B. Franklin, U. S. A.:

General,—The facts contained in the accompanying letter of Mr. A. J. Dallas are so clearly stated that they need no enforcement from me; yet as they are known to me personally, and he has my warmest regard, I do not feel at liberty to decline giving the fullest endorsement to his statement. I am convinced that there must have been some mistake in regard to his rejection, having had occasion to believe that his case was to be favorably reported on. *You will observe, General, that he was confirmed by the Senate for the Marine Corps, when the circumstance of his being dropped from the Navy were comparatively recent. This should correct any unfavorable idea in the present case,* and leave to Mr. Dallas' conduct and capacity, as exhibited to you in his recent connection with you as recruiting officer, to determine, at his present mature age, his capacity and qualifications, as a Captain, in your regiment.

If, as I understand, your judgment is favorable to Mr. Dallas, I would earnestly plead that you will bring his case before the President, giving him the evidence of mistake in the determination, which may induce His Excellency to restore Mr. Dallas to his position, and again present his name to the Senate, when there will be ample time and opportunity to examine into the matter.

Very respectfully and truly yours,

A. D. Bache.

Exhibit No. 3.

Letter of Brig. Gen'l. Wm. B. Franklin, U. S. Army, to the President of the United States.

Alexandria, Va., Aug. 12th, 1861.

Dear Sir,—One of the Captains of the 12th infantry, Captain A. J. Dallas, has been rejected by the Senate. I do not know what were the reasons for this rejection, but I do know that he served under my command as recruiting officer in New York for about two weeks; that he

performed his duties faithfully, and with ability, while he was there, and gave every indication that he would make an excellent officer at the very time the services of good officers are so much needed.

I transmit a letter stating his case, with an endorsement from Mr. A. D. Bache, giving an account of the probable reasons which induced his rejection. I believe both statements entitled to entire confidence, and I think, under the circumstances, it would be an act of sheer justice to Mr. Dallas to reinstate him, and let him have another trial before the Senate.

I am so hurried by my duties here, that I do not, perhaps, present the case as strongly as I might, *but* I AM CONVINCED THAT BY THE REJECTION OF MR. DALLAS, THE COUNTRY LOSES THE SERVICES OF AN EXCELLENT OFFICER.

I hope that you will feel that you can reinstate him, and I take the liberty of addressing you on the subject, because he is in my own regiment.

Very respectfully yours,

WM. B. FRANKLIN,
Brig. Gen'l.

Hon. A. LINCOLN,
President of the United States.

Exhibit No. 4.

Endorsement of the Adjutant General U. S. Army.

Prior to the date of the appointment of Captain Dallas, and at the time, he (then in the Volunteer Service) was on duty in my office assisting Major Garesché, in his important duties. He was assiduous in the performance of his duties, and I was induced to urge his appointment in the army. I regretted to hear of his rejection by the Senate.

August 13th, 1861.

L. THOMAS,
Adjt. Gen'l.

Exhibit No. 5.

First Order of the President of the United States.

It is said Captain Dallas was rejected by the Senate through mistake. If Gen. Thomas can be satisfied to a reasonable degree of certainty, that this is true, let Captain Dallas be re-appointed at once.

A. LINCOLN.

August 14th, 1861.

Exhibit No. 6.

Endorsement of Senator Milton S. Latham, with concurrence of Senator Henry Wilson.

It was stated in the Military Committee of the Senate, that Captain Dallas was dismissed from the Navy and Marine Corps. This caused his rejection. Had the truth been known, he would have been confirmed by the Senate, and endorsed by the Committee without doubt. In my opinion a great wrong has been done this gentleman.

MILTON S. LATHAM,
Of S. Mil. Com.

I concur in the above.

H. WILSON,
Chairman Mil. Com.

Exhibit No. 7.

Second Order of the President of the United States.

I repeat, that if Adjutant General Thomas is reasonably well satisfied, that Captain Dallas was rejected by the Senate, through a misapprehension of facts, he is to be re-appointed. It is the opinion of the Adjutant General and of General Franklin, as shown by what they have written within, that he is a good officer.

A. LINCOLN.

August 17th, 1861.

Exhibit No. 8.

Decision of Honorable Secretary Cameron as to the reinstatement of Captain Dallas.

I made this appointment from a conviction of the fitness of Mr. Dallas, and have been greatly surprised to hear of his rejection, and the great wrong done him, but my habitual respect for the Senate compels me to submit to its decision. I shall order no re-appointment after a rejection, in the recess of the Senate.

In this case the President has assumed the responsibility, and I cheerfully submit to his decision.

SIMON CAMERON.

August 19th, 1861.

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